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ABSTRACT

This book reviews present knowledge about suicidal behavior in American Indians, prevention efforts in Native communities, and recommendations for understanding suicidal behavior and developing suicide prevention efforts. Data from Canadian aboriginal groups is also included. Chapter 1 explains why suicide in American Indians is of concern to public health professionals and policy makers and presents data on the demographic history of U.S. and Canadian American Indians. Chapter 2 discusses American Indian suicide rates, and notes that official rates are probably underestimated. Chapter 3 finds that American Indian suicide rates are higher than those of the general population, particularly among men and youth. Regional studies of suicide are also reviewed. Chapter 4 finds that the psychological causes of suicide are the same for American Indians as for Whites. Chapter 5 discusses sociological causes of suicide, including acculturation stress and social integration, but concludes that there is little sound research on the subject. Chapter 6 finds that state suicide rates of American Indians show a very different pattern of associations with state social variables than do state suicide rates of Whites. Chapters 7-8 examine suicide rates by tribe. The review of prevention strategies in chapter 9 applauds the fact that most prevention efforts have been in primary prevention, but finds a lack of adequate evaluation components. The final chapter presents general conclusions, speculates about the causes of suicide in American Indians, and makes suggestions for future research. (Contains references in each chapter and an index.) (TD)



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